

TRIBES OF LIFAN COUNTY

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She¹ carries all her worldly possessions in the form of decorations in her hair, and around her neck and wrists. That is the reason why paper money is of no use in this region.

In regard to shoes, the Ch'iang people are usually bare-footed, or wear straw sandals. The Gia-rung people wear cloth shoes of the Tsing dynasty style, and the Fan people and the Black River people wear boots. This is due to the differences in the winter temperature.

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There is no tribal difference in foodstuffs, but rather a difference in crops according to differences in the attitude. Both the Ch'iang and Gia-rung who live below an altitude of 8,000 ft. use corn as their staple food. For those who live above 8,000, their cheap food supply is Irish potatoes and barley and oats. For the Fan people in the grasslands, it is barley flour and butter and milk, and practically no green vegetables. The reason for the corn diet of people living below 8,000 ft. altitude is that mountain farms are generally small and their improved land is still more limited. The farmers are poor, and therefore they are under compulsion to raise the crop which will give them the most food, and not crops which are usually more nutritious. For people who live above 8,000 ft., the humidity is higher and the temperature lower; therefore, natural conditions are not suitable for the cultivation of corn, which requires much sunshine, but is favorable for oats and potatoes. Therefore these people live on potatoes instead of corn.

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In the grasslands agriculture is prohibited by geographical limitations. People have to trade for barley flour mixed with bean powder. It is called Cham-Pa 糌粑. At meal time they just mix it with tea or milk, and that is their staple food. They eat with their hands; they do not bother with chopstick.

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The manner of eating is greatly affected by the distance from the Chinese. The Ch'iang and Gia-rung tribes, who are nearer to the Chinese, use chopsticks, and their kitchens are built upon a double pattern; that is, they have the Chinese kitchen arrangement, and at the same time also have fire places in the centers of their kitchens. The Gia-rung who live in the upper valley of the Cha-ku River, and the Black River people, and the Fan people, have only the fireplace and very little furniture in the home; no tables, no chairs, and no beds, but they use fur and woolen mats as bedding.

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Tea seems to be the life blood of all. Tea drinking to the people of Li-fan county is far more important even than tea drinking is to the English.

D. SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN RELATION TO GROUP LIVING.

1. GRAZING COOPERATIVES

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Among the Ch'iang and Gia-rung in the drainage area of the Min in the southeast, the people are mainly agricultural. They cultivate the slopes between the high mountains and the deep valleys. The cultivable area is naturally limited, and every inch is valuable.

¹[the Fan woman, -- Analyst]